

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 13-26 are pending in this application. All were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) in view of Butler. Applicant asks the Office to reconsider this application and allow all of the claims.

Claim 1

With respect to claim 1, Butler does not even remotely suggest, let alone teach, “storing . . . business-related data from [two unrelated] business entities in a common database” and, “in accordance with the terms of an agreement among the business entities, allowing at least one of the business entities to receive information gathered from the common database,” as claimed. Applicant finds absolutely nothing in Butler to suggest that two business entities might be acting in concert, through the terms of an agreement between the business entities, to store their business data in a common database and then making this data available for retrieval by one or both of the entities. The Office, in fact, appears to ignore this requirement of an “agreement” between unrelated entities altogether, as it fails in its discussion of claim 1 (Office action, page 5) to include a reference to any part of the Butler patent that might show such an agreement. The Office also fails to point out any portion of Butler that shows or suggests the receipt of business data “from two unrelated business entities” for storage in the common database.

The Office fails to find these claim elements in Butler for good reason – Butler simply does not envision the kind of data-sharing arrangement claimed by Applicant. In fact, from Applicant’s reading of Butler, it appears clear that Butler’s system is meant for use by a single business entity in its attempts to reduce its costs in preparing bids for contracts from other businesses, in particular from governmental entities. In column 1, for example, Butler states that its primary objective is to help “a company . . . increase the efficiency in which it can prepare formal bids and proposals for contracts” (lines 45-46). To do so, the company maintains a vast repository of information on a computer network, information that employees throughout the company can draw upon when putting together bids and proposals for contracts. This information includes the “graphic

images" used by the company in conducting its business (col. 5, lines 40-45), the "textual resumes" of company's employees (col. 5, lines 48-58), an inventory of the "skills and experience levels" of the company's employees (col. 5, lines 60-65), "abstracts of past proposals" from the company to the business entity from which the company is seeking business (col. 6, lines 17-20), and information about the company's customers (col. 6, 34-40), to name just some.

A human "user" (*i.e.*, an employee of the company) makes use of Butler's system by accessing a "search engine to locate abstracted information in an effort to compile information for a new proposal or to perform forecasting of future deals." (Col. 8, lines 1-3.) The result for the company, according to Butler, is a "significant savings of time, money and effort . . . in preparing new proposals." (Col. 8, lines 18-20.)

Once again, however, Applicant finds nothing throughout the entirety of Butler's disclosure to suggest that any more than one business entity is involved in creating or using Butler's system. Butler certainly does not show or suggest the receipt of data from two unrelated business entities or the retrieval of data from the system according to the terms of an agreement between two such entities. Accordingly, claim 1 and the claims that depend from it all are patentable over Butler.

Claims 18, 25 and 26

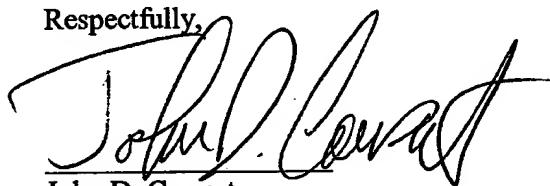
As with claim 1, claims 18, 25 and 26 require gathering data from multiple unrelated business entities and granting access to that data according to some agreement between the business entities. As discussed above, Butler neither shows nor suggests these elements of the claims. Accordingly, all of these claims, as well as the claims that depend from them, are patentable over Butler.

CONCLUSIONS

The prior art of record does not show or suggest the invention claimed by Applicant. Therefore, all of the claims are allowable. Applicant asks the Office to reconsider this application and allow all of the claims.

The Office is authorized to charge any fees that may be due, except for the issue fee, to deposit account 14-0225.

Respectfully,



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